

SC011972

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately operated children's home. It is registered for up to six young people. Currently, only boys are accommodated. The home specialises in caring for young people who have experienced trauma in their lives and may exhibit some behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 29 November 2011.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 November 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 8 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
10/01/2018	Full	Good
21/03/2017	Full	Good
22/08/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— (a) paragraph (1) does not apply; and (b) the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 2(a)(b))	31/01/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))	31/01/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:
 - detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's Statement of Purpose;
 - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
 - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;

– detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, the staff team has skilfully supported three young people, who had lived at the home for a long time, to move on in a planned way. Over the past few years, the staff have prepared them well, both practically and emotionally, for their futures. This has included learning important social and life skills. During this time, the young people also learned how to build and maintain trusting relationships with adults. As a result, they were able to move on successfully.

The timing and compatibility of the three young people who recently moved in, contributed to them experiencing a rocky start. Despite this, and due to the commitment from the staff team, the young people are now making progress and learning to live alongside each other. They are also benefiting from lots of individual attention from the staff to keep them engaged and meet their individual and complex needs.

Focused staff and managers ensure that the young people have access to education and learning. They are very good at supporting the young people to attend different types of settings tailored to meet their needs. One young person proudly told the inspector that his biggest achievement was 'returning to mainstream education'. Because of this, and with the encouragement and support from the staff, he is now on track to achieve his predicted grades and start college next year.

Staff continue to support the young people to be as independent as possible. This includes being given the freedom to navigate their way through adolescence and the challenges that this brings. One young person spoken to during the inspection told the inspector that he had learned important lessons from the staff and local police about the consequences of his behaviour. This included being given the opportunity to learn from his mistakes while he was still young enough for it not to affect his future.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The registered manager is committed to ensuring that the young people feel safe. Instances of bullying within the group of young people are responded to immediately. The staff use focused conversations with the young people to address the issues, explore them and think about the different ways to behave towards their peers. Accepting that this can take the young people time to understand, and while bullying remains an

ongoing issue, staffing levels have been increased to ensure that the young people get the protection and attention they need.

The registered manager is very clear that holding the young people in response to their challenging behaviour should only be used as a last resort. Noting an unusual increase in the number of times the children were being held led to a thorough exploration as to the reasons why. This resulted in the young people's support plans being reviewed and updated as well as organising refresher training for the staff. The young people are now more settled, and the number of incidents has reduced.

Supportive staff actively listen to the young people. Anything that the young people say that is of concern is taken seriously. All matters are recorded in detail and, where necessary, reported to the appropriate agency. If the concern is related to staff's performance, the registered manager does not hesitate to act when standards of care fall below what is expected. As a result, the young people feel safe to express how they feel.

Leaders and managers understand the risks related to fire safety and take all the necessary precautions to keep everyone safe. However, extra precautions which have been risk assessed, for example locking some fire extinguishers away and locking the back gates, have been completed in the absence of advice from the local fire authority. This risks hindering the safe evacuation of the staff and children in the event of a fire.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is very determined to see that the young people experience stability in their lives. However, a culmination of unpredictable events, including a significant number of staff resignations, led to an unusually turbulent and unsettled period. While this naturally led to the young people feeling sad, the impact of this was minimised by using consistent agency and casual staff to fill the vacancies.

The registered manager also has high expectations of the staff and the care that they give to the young people. However, some staff's inability to adapt and respond to different ways of working after settled young people moved on did not match the therapeutic ethos of the home. Recent changes within the staff team, which include new staff and internal promotions, have addressed this and are already having a positive impact.

Effective monitoring systems, including visits and reports from the independent visitor, provide a good overview of the quality of care being provided. However, due to recent events, some of the internal systems have not been fully used. While the impact has been minimal, it is a missed opportunity to continually improve the standards across the service. An example of this includes the workforce development plan. It does not provide enough detail about the skills and experience of staff and how they can specifically meet the needs of the current group of young people.

The supervision of staff is frequent and provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on

their practice. However, not all staff benefit from formal meetings. This particularly relates to the agency and casual staff that work more frequently in the home covering shifts and staff vacancies. This does not currently have a negative impact, but it is not consistent with the organisation's efforts to support, develop and retain staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC011972

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester,
Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Rachel Burgess

Inspector:

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

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